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AVOYELLES WATER COMMISSION BREAKS GROUND ON \$12.7 MILLION PROJECT

Residents of Ward 3 Water System, Marksville, and Moreauville to Benefit

MANSURA, February 10, 2005 – Michael B. Taylor, State Director for USDA Rural Development in Louisiana, joined the Avoyelles Water Commission and state and local officials to break ground on a new water system in Avoyelles Parish.

\$12,792,000 in USDA Rural Development direct loan funds are being used to build a new large water system to serve Ward 3 Water System, Marksville, and Moreauville residents. The new water system will provide a more cost effective source of water for each community and its residents, as well as provide for future growth of other water systems.

“We offer affordable financing to rural communities for development, improvement, and expansion of rural water systems,” said Taylor. “Our goal is to improve the quality of life and increase economic development in rural America, and this project will accomplish both by offering a more cost effective source of good quality drinking water and increased capacity for the water systems.”

“The new system will include two new water well fields, a new pumping station, and over 30 miles of new 24-inch water lines,” said Joan DeCuir, Secretary-Treasurer of the Avoyelles Water Commission. “Through the help of USDA Rural Development, we are working to build our parish infrastructure for the good of our citizens as well as economic development. This project shows how several communities working together can make great things happen.” It is anticipated that the new water system will be in operation by April 2006.

USDA Rural Development provides a full range of rural development credit services in rural Louisiana. The Louisiana Rural Development State Office is located at 3727 Government Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71302, and the telephone number is (318) 473-7921. There are four area offices located throughout the state to serve Louisiana residents. Further information on USDA Rural Development’s loan and grant programs can be obtained by visiting Rural Development’s web site at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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